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SUBJECT: OSCE: CHAIRWOMAN-IN-OFFICE BRIEFS SECURITY COUNCIL
ON GREEK PRIORITIES

11. SUMMARY. Greek Foreign Minister and OSCE Chairperson-in-Office, Dora Bakoyannis, briefed the UN Security Council on February 27 on Greece's priorities for the OSCE. She called for a continued OSCE presence in Georgia as well as border security and policing projects in Central Asia and Afghanistan. She expressed willingness to facilitate a security dialogue among OSCE members based on proposals submitted by Russian President Medvedev. Ambassador DiCarlo called for a bolstering of military monitoring strength in South Ossetia, Georgia. Russian Permrep (PR) Churkin acknowledged the importance of the OSCE as a regional organization, but emphasized the primacy of the Security Council for maintaining international peace and security. He alleged that the OSCE in Georgia had failed to fulfill its role by not preventing or predicting the actions of Georgia leading to the August 2008 conflict. Libyan Deputy Permrep Dabbashi, supported by Ugandan DPR Butagira, accused the Council of using a double standard with regional organizations who wish to speak before the Security Council. French PR Ripert chastised the Libyan for using a public Council meeting to express an opinion he had not raised during the Council's prior consultations. END SUMMARY.

12. OSCE Chairperson-in-Office (CiO), Greek Minister of Foreign Affairs Dora Bakoyannis, briefed the Security Council on February 27 about Greek priorities for the OSCE. Her first priority, she said, is to strengthen the OSCE in the field, including in Georgia, Kosovo and Central Asia. The CiO said the OSCE should do more, not less in Georgia. She said she would continue to play an active role, acting as an honest broker, in discussions over retaining an OSCE mission in Georgia, as well as in the Geneva-based discussions on security and stability. She highlighted the humanitarian work of the OSCE in Georgia, which included resolving the disruption of gas deliveries in South Ossetia. The Greek Chairmanship, she said, also plans to improve border security and policing projects in Central Asia, including Afghanistan. She listed other priorities of the Greek Chairmanship as promoting OSCE roles in counterterrorism, migration issues, climate change, and strengthening the rule of law. She ended by stating that the OSCE was designed to be an inclusive forum for political and security dialogue, and as CiO, she would be willing to facilitate future discussions about European security.

13. Following the CiO's presentation, other Council members made statements. Ambassador DiCarlo spoke of the OSCE's role in promoting peaceful resolution to conflicts in Southeastern Europe and the Caucasus. She welcomed efforts to broaden cooperation between the UN and OSCE in Central Asia, such as through border management projects and elections assistance for Afghanistan. In Georgia, she underscored the need to bolster the mission with additional military monitors in South Ossetia and urged the Geneva co-chairs to call for another round of talks on security issues in March or April 12009.

14. Other OSCE members of the Security Council - United Kingdom, France, Turkey, Austria and Croatia - welcomed the CiO's approach to Georgia, Kosovo, and Central Asia. U.K. Permrep Sawers and French Permrep Ripert both said they were open to discussing Russian ideas for a review of the European security architecture. Sawers said the U.K. was looking for more analysis of the issue and wondered whether a new treaty was really necessary. Ripert said France would support the OSCE CiO in pursuing a high-level dialogue. Turkey stated that it was the OSCE's duty to make the treaty on Conventional Forces in Europe relevant.

15. Russian Permrep Churkin acknowledged the importance of the OSCE as a regional organization, but emphasized that the Security Council has the primary role for maintaining international peace and security. He said, that the OSCE in Georgia was a poor example of UN-OSCE cooperation, as the OSCE had failed to fulfill its responsibility to prevent or predict the actions of Georgia leading to the August 2008 conflict, by withholding reports of the Georgian military buildup from member states. He said the mandate of the OSCE Mission in Georgia was not in line with the "new political realities" in the region. He said Russia would support an extension of OSCE's field work in Georgia and South Ossetia, but that there needed to be two separate missions. He also said that the extension of observers needed to be in accordance with the "Medvedev-Sarkozy" agreement. Churkin said the situation in the Caucasus demonstrated the shortcomings of the current Euro-Atlantic security structure, and said he would expect close OSCE cooperation in discussing Russia's comprehensive security initiative.

16. Libyan Deputy Permrep Dabbashi, supported by Ugandan DPR Butagira, accused the Council of "discrimination" and of

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"adopting a double standard" with regional organizations who wish to speak before the Security Council. He pointed out that the OSCE CiO had been invited, for the second time in four months to brief the Council, while at the same time, he said, the Council had rejected requests from the Arab League and the African Union to brief the Council. Dabbashi said he hoped the Council would in the future apply the same standard to all regional organizations.

17. French PR Ripert responded by calling Dabbashi's comments, "puzzling". Ripert pointed out that the decision to hear the OSCE CiO had been a unanimous one, so the perceived slight would therefore have to be a "unanimous double standard". He chastised the Libyan for raising the issue in a public forum but not during the Council's prior consultations. He also pointed out that during the numerous debates on the Gaza crisis during France's January SC Presidency, neither the African Union nor the Arab League had been refused their requests to participate in any of the Council's meetings. Ripert called for the Secretariat to produce statistics about how many times various regional organizations have addressed the Council.

18. Russian Permrep Churkin said he thought the exchange of views over invitations to regional organizations demonstrated that the Council needed to "fine-tune" its relationship with regional organizations, and he suggested that Russia might raise the question as a thematic issue during its May Security Council presidency.

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